

Falcon Focus

News for Neighborhood Watch Leaders in the Falcon Patrol District

What Makes A Successful Neighborhood Watch?

Typically, Neighborhood Watch groups are organized due to occurrences of crime in their area. Often, when the crime has gone away, so does the Neighborhood Watch. A Neighborhood Watch does more than just relieve the immediate threat of crime, a Watch group empowers people to take action, builds partnerships between law enforcement and the communities they serve, and forges communication among residents. Neighborhood Watch is far more than a quick fix for an immediate crisis, it can be a moving force for positive changes that tackle root causes of crime.

Successful Neighborhood Watches move beyond the basics of home security, watching out for suspicious activity, and reporting crime to law enforcement. They sponsor community cleanups, find solutions to neighborhood problems, and use community resources to improve the quality of life and reduce the fear of crime.

To keep a Neighborhood Watch vital, blend crime prevention into other community concerns. This can be accomplished by establishing a committee of 3-5 residents who will meet on a regular basis to coordinate Neighborhood Watch events and address neighborhood problems. The committee should be headed by the Neighborhood Watch Captain and can include Co-Captains, Assistant Captains and residents from the neighborhood.

The organization of a neighborhood committee will provide the driving force needed to strengthen and motivate the Neighborhood Watch program. It is difficult for one neighborhood captain to sustain an active watch group, but with others sharing a common goal, anything is possible. You can have an active and healthy Neighborhood Watch program, but it requires commitment, teamwork, communication and partnerships.

Key points to an effective neighborhood committee:

- Delegate tasks and assignments
- Meet on regular basis
- Mobilize outside resources
- Keep meetings short and efficient
- Establish neighborhood newsletters
- Plan event & activity dates
- Prioritize neighborhood concerns
- Think outside the box
- Balance business and pleasure

A Neighborhood Watch's effectiveness depends heavily on it's leaders.

Good block captains usually:

- Are reliable
- Get along well with other people
- Have good communication skills
- Don't get discouraged easily
- Are willing to delegate
- Are organized
- Don't stop at prevention
- Willing to help others

Need Neighborhood Watch information ASAP?

Mesa's Web site is just a mouse click away! You can find loads of useful Neighborhood Watch information, as well as other information about the police department's many programs and services.

www.cityofmesa.org/police

Visit us on the Web today!

BLOCK LEADERS MEETING HELD

On February 12, 2004 the Falcon District Block Leaders meeting was held. Out of 400 invitations sent out, 45 neighborhood leaders were in attendance. The meeting began with a brief introduction provided by the new Falcon District Commander Fred Ruhland.

Block Leaders participated in a variety of meeting warm-up activities including: "Punny Business" and "Magic Wand." Several attendees assisted in a communication exercise where they had to complete the end of a question. For example: The one change I would like to see in our neighborhood is? A neighborhood Watch quiz was given, and many passed with an A+.

Paul Fernandez from Code Compliance provided a very informative presentation on city code violations, and Darin Douglas from Police Communications discussed the 911 system. Overall, it was a fun, informative and successful meeting. If you missed the meeting, some of the handout materials are available online at: www.cityofmesa.org/police/literature/falcon_capt_mtgs.asp

How to Reach Us:

Mesa Police Department
Community Relations Unit
130 N. Robson Street
Mesa, AZ 85201-6697

Jerry Quarles
Falcon District
Neighborhood Watch
(480) 644-2539
Jerry.quarles@cityofmesa.org

How To Throw A Block Party

Putting together a block party isn't all that different from organizing a child's birthday celebration. Just follow these easy steps, and you are on your way to great event.

Set a date and time

Your best chance at having a good turnout is to hold your event while school's still in session so you don't run the risk of losing participants to summer vacations.

The date and time you select will never be convenient for everyone, so just pick one and go with it. Make sure you provide an ending time, this will help eliminate problems later.

Make a guest list

You should invite absolutely everyone in your watch group. Also, consider inviting other homes that may be on the edges of your Neighborhood Watch.

Think about inviting a nearby street. A majority of the residents may not show up, but for the ones that do, they can see how successful your event is and may want to start their own watch group.

Sending Invitations

Plan on sending the first invitation out about 3-4 weeks in advance, this allows everyone to mark their calendars. Send a reminder invitation a maximum of 1 week in advance, but no sooner than 48 hours.

Use the invitation to do the work for you. Tell the participants about the event, type of theme, reason for event, what they need to bring and any activities planned.

Planning

Think the event through. Will you need additional tables and chairs? Have ice for cold dishes? Plenty of paper ware? Establish a committee and make assignments.

You will need a location for the party. This can be a front yard, retention basin or even in the street. You may need to arrange for street barricades at: (480) 644-2160

Activities

Plan the activities so there is something for all ages to do. The type of activities you arrange can positively affect the attendance of participants. Your activities could include: door prize drawings, scavenger hunts, arts and crafts, water-balloon tosses, face painting, amateur hour and cooking contests. The possibilities are endless.

Food

There's no question that food will be a major focus of your party and the number one reason most people will show up. There are many ways to handle the food situation, the easiest of course is to have a potluck.

You can contact local food stores to see if they would be willing to help out your neighborhood party by providing needed items.

At the party

Provide name tags. Having a visual of participants names will encourage contact and communication.

Prepare for bad weather. Have a secondary location (garage or carport) ready.

Have attendance sheets available for participants to sign. You decide what information you want them to provide (name, house number, phone #, and e-mail). You may also provide a spot for them to mark if they would like to assist in the planning of the next event.

When you are ready to end the event, start the clean-up process. Turn off the music, put food away and begin breaking down tables and decorations.

Don't forget to send the attendance sheets to the Crime Prevention Unit after the event to receive credit towards the Neighborhood Watch program.

Calendar of Events

March 30 & April 1

**Rape Aggression Defense
(Self Defense for Women)**

5 to 9:30 p.m.

Red Mountain

Multigenerational Center

April 22, 2004

Help Eliminate Auto Theft Event

4 to 6 p.m.

Central Substation

120 N. Robson Street, Mesa

October 9, 2004

G.A.I.N. Event

Getting Arizona Involved

in Neighborhoods

5 to 9 p.m.

Various Mesa Neighborhoods

Food For Thought

If you have **BULK** mail stopped at the post office, you will not receive mailings from the Crime Prevention Unit since we send mail by bulk. You can be added to the Neighborhood Watch electronic mail list by providing me an e-mail address. This will ensure you are getting all the news and information related to Neighborhood Watch.